A message from
the Chief Executive Officer

Derek Valdo

Guuwaadzi’ Haubaa! (Greetings)

Emergency preparedness can make the difference between an unfortunate event and a tragedy. Up to 40 percent of businesses never reopen after a disaster. Outlining an emergency plan, training your staff, and regularly performing drills can ensure that your Tribal business and employees do not fall into these statistics.

In honor of National Preparedness Month, observed each September, AMERIND Risk urges all businesses in Indian Country to prepare for emergencies—ranging from severe storms to natural disasters to active shooters. Organizations that plan, train, communicate, and assess their emergency response protocol reduce the likelihood of injury to patrons and staff, as well as damage to property.

AMERIND encourages every company to adopt the workplace slogan “safety starts with me.” Each team member plays an important role in prevention, preparedness and emergency response—not just management or safety professionals. Business leaders can empower every team member to partake in the emergency action plan by clearly delineating response roles and leading regular emergency drills.

We call on Indian Country to address preparedness now, well in advance of a looming crisis, and before sudden disaster strikes. As a 17-year employee of AMERIND Risk, including more than five years as Chief Executive Officer, I speak from personal experience. The AMERIND team has witnessed many hardships endured by our Tribal members. As much as we celebrate Native success stories and the vitality of our Tribal communities, we also mourn the losses and fatal tragedies.

AMERIND Risk is also using Fire Prevention Week, observed October 8-14, as a platform to reinforce the importance of clear evacuation plans to Tribal entities.

Thank you for taking the initiative to protect your Tribal business and staff, and in turn to contribute to the sustainability of Indian Country. Preparedness is integral to AMERIND’s mission of Tribes Protecting Tribes.

Sincerely,

Derek Valdo
CEO

‘Get Ready’ During National Preparedness Month

Is your Tribal business prepared for emergencies? Every second counts during a crisis, so it’s important to plan ahead. In September, as part of National Preparedness Month, AMERIND Risk and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) encourage every Tribal business to develop a game plan.

Draft an emergency action plan.

Create an emergency action plan—a written document that outlines employee actions during workplace emergencies. A well-developed plan that’s easily understood by employees will likely result in fewer and less severe injuries and less damage to Tribal facilities.

Take critical questions into account when preparing your emergency action plan:

- What types of emergencies have occurred at your business facilities in the past?
- What types of severe weather conditions is your geographic region prone to—wildfires, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, hail, extreme fog, etc.?
- What incidents could result due to a system failure?
- What emergencies could be caused by employee error (one of the biggest causes of workplace emergencies)?
- What incidents could be caused by employee oversight, such as failure or neglect to clean up hazardous chemical spills?

Train your team to handle emergency response and communication.

Training should be offered when you develop your initial plan and to all new hires. Employees should be retrained when duties or responsibilities under the plan change, or if a new facility layout, equipment, or hazards are introduced.

Educate employees about the types of emergencies that could occur. Be sure they understand the elements of your emergency action plan and any specific site hazards. In addition, training should address:

- Who will be in charge,
- Notification procedures,
- How to locate family members in an emergency,
- Evacuation and sheltering procedures,
- Location and use of emergency equipment, and
- Shutdown procedures.

FEMA also recommends a crisis communication plan. This describes how your organization will communicate with employees, local authorities, customers, and others during and after a disaster.

Employees need information about reporting to work. Emergency responders, the general public, and neighboring businesses should be
provided with a briefing on the nature of the emergency.

Practice drills regularly.

Go beyond planning and actually practice your plan on a regular basis. Employees should be familiar with navigating escape routes and areas of refuge. Frequent drills also remind staff of the importance of hallways and doorways always remaining free of obstructions.

Many workplaces that successfully avert incidents escalating to serious tragedy conduct frequent drills and exercises—some investing in sophisticated simulations to ensure that everyone knows what to expect and what to do.

For more information, visit amerindrisk.org/safetytraining.

Plan Two Ways Out!

Can you identify two ways that you could safely exit your workplace in the event of a fire? That’s the challenge AMERIND Risk poses to all Tribal employees for Fire Prevention Week, observed October 8–14, 2017. It’s critical that employers designate emergency evacuation procedures and exit route assignments.

Fire/evacuation drill procedures are an essential part of a workplace safety program. Fire drills should be conducted at least every six months or annually. After a fire drill, businesses should conduct an employee briefing to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

Remember that training, such as fire extinguisher education, is an integral part of any fire prevention and escape plan.

When planning fire drills, employers should consider:

- The frequency of fire drills
- Scheduling fire drills for every shift
- The location of fire drill maps and instructions
- The supervisors’ responsibilities during a fire drill
- The signal for a fire drill
- The acceptable amount of time for complete evacuation
- Whether the drill will be planned or spontaneous

5 TIPS FOR INSTILLING A WORKPLACE SAFETY CULTURE

AMERIND believes that if Tribal businesses instill a workplace safety culture, they will reduce their losses and improve employee morale. Here are five critical tips to make that a reality.

1. Inspire safety from the top down.
Creating a workplace environment that values safety is only effective when management buys in. Business leaders and managers should demonstrate safety practices and encourage their employees to identify and resolve safety risks. Safety culture trickles down from the top.

2. Identify risks early on.
Inspect your workspace, casino floor or business environment for potential hazards daily, and train your staff to do the same.

Actively engaged employees will identify and correct safety hazards at the earliest stage. Recognize employee efforts with praise or reward.

3. Give every employee a voice.
Empower employees to speak up. Every employee deserves and needs a voice to report concerns or hazards to management and to elevate overall safety awareness. Embrace the mantra, “If you see something, say something.” Open communication allows safety reporting to become a habit. Additionally, when Tribal businesses encourage employees to suggest innovative solutions to safety issues, they foster a greater sense of team unity and purpose.

4. Be consistent.
Keep safety top of mind by hosting regular safety meetings and trainings. That said, remember regular reinforcement forms habits, not quarterly meetings. Constantly provide or email safety resources, enforce safety practices, and commend good safety behavior.

5. Encourage wellness.
Healthy employees are safe employees. When employees hydrate, eat well and stay active, they feel better, and are more likely to stay alert about safety on the job.

Find more safety tips at: www.AMERINDRisk.org @AMERINDRisk www.facebook.com/AMERINDRisk-157506987725744/?fref=ts